A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

HOUSE of LORDS,

AT THE

Abbey-Church in *Westminster*,

On *Friday*, *Jan.* 30. $170\frac{7}{8}$.

MATTH. XXVI. 51, 52.

And behold one of them which were with JESUS *stretched out his hand, and drew his Sword, and stroke a Servant of the High-Priest, and smote off his Ear.*

Then said JESUS *unto him, Put up again thy Sword into his place; for All they that take the Sword, shall perish with the Sword.*

y the Right Reverend Father in God, WILLIAM Lord Bishop of *Lincoln*.

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John xviii. 10, 11. IN theſe Words we have an account of what paſs'd between St. *Peter*, and one of thoſe who came to apprehend our Bleſſed Lord, in order his Crucifixion. The Chief Prieſts and Scribes had now reſolved upon his Death; and *Judas*, who betray'd him, had brought their Soldiers to the place where he was to be taken. The Guard had laid hold on Him, and were juſt ready to carry him away to his Enemies; when *Peter*, not able any longer to endure ſuch a Violence to be offer'd to his dear Maſter, drew his Sword, and began in his well-meant, tho' inconſiderate Zeal, to engage in good earneſt for his Rescue: *And behold one of them which were with* Jeſus *ſtretched out his hand, and drew his Sword, and ſtroke a Servant of the* High Prieſt's, *and ſmote off his Ear.* But our Saviour, inſtead of approving, condemn'd his Action, and commanded him to deſiſt from his raſh and unwarrantable Attempt: *Then ſaid* Jeſus *unto him, Put up again thy Sword into his place; for All they that take the Sword, ſhall periſh with the Sword.*

For the better uuderſtanding of which words, you may pleaſe to obſerve theſe Two things.

Firſt; That the true ground of the Malice of theſe Men againſt our Saviour, was, that he ſet up himſelf for the *Meſſiah*; and under that Character publiſh'd his Goſpel to the World. His Life and Converſation were

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not only Blameless, but Exemplary: *He knew no sin, neither was any guile found in his mouth*, 1 Pet. 2. 22. Even the Jews themselves, when they most desired it, could lay no Crime to his Charge, except it were this One, That *by their Law he ought to die, because he made himself the* Son of God, *John* 19. 7.

It was not therefore for any personal Crimes that these Men pursued our Lord with so much Violence. But, He wrought many Miracles: He had but just before raised up *Lazarus* from the dead; and as themselves reason'd in their last Council, in which they resolv'd upon his Death, *John* 11. 48. *If we let him alone, all Men will believe on him; and the* Romans *shall come, and take away both our Place and Nation.*

This was his fault, and this was, in truth, all that they had to alledge against him, *Pilate* himself knew *that for Envy they had delivered him* into his hands, *Matth.* 27. 18. And upon what their Envy was founded, I have before shewn; and the whole History of his Life sufficiently assures us of the Justice of the Remark.

But Secondly; The other thing to be observ'd for the better understanding of the true Import of the Text is this; That our Saviour forbidding St. *Peter* to resist their Violence upon this account, that *All they that take the Sword, shall perish with the Sword*, may be understood to have spoken these Words in two very different Respects: Either with Relation to those who came to Apprehend him; or with Relation to the Apostle, who would have deliver'd him out of their hands.

If we consider them with Relation to those who came to Apprehend our Blessed Saviour, they will then carry this Sense; That St. *Peter* should not draw his Sword against them, but should leave their Punishment to God; who would not fail to return their Violence in a signal manner upon them. An Interpretation the rather to be consider'd, in that the following Event did eminently confirm the Truth of the Prediction: God having, for this very Reason, brought upon that whole

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Nation one of the most terrible Destructions that ever fell upon People in the World.

But yet, for all this, I think the other, and more common application of these words to St. *Peter*, as it is the more natural, so is it, for that Reason, the rather to be preferr'd; and then the meaning of them will be this: That He should consider Who he was, and What he had done? And remember how severe a Sentence God had pronounced against All such as, without a just warrant so to do, should take the Sword into their Hands; *Gen.* 9. 6. *Whoso sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed.*

We will, if you please, join both these Interpretations together, and out of *Both* make up this One strong Argument, against St. *Peter's* attempt upon this occasion: That he ought not to have drawn his Sword against those to whom God had committed the Power of the Sword; but should have left it to him, to whom alone it belonged, to punish their Violence; *Put up thy Sword into his place*; *For, All they that take the Sword, shall perish with the Sword.*

In discoursing upon which words, with relation to the mournful Solemnity of this Day, I shall observe this Method.

I. I will enquire, Why our Saviour would not suffer St. *Peter* to take the Sword in his Defence; but required him to leave his Cause to God, as the only proper Judge of it.

II. I will shew, That it is still unlawful for any Christians, under the like Circumstances, to take the Sword.

Which having done; I will then proceed, from the Principles before laid down, to consider,

III. What we are to judge of those, who notwithstanding so plain an Admonition to the contrary; not only took the Sword (tho' that had been too much) but took it against that Royal Person, who alone had the rightful Power of it.

I begin

I begin with the first of these; to enquire,

1. Why our Saviour would not suffer St. *Peter* to take the Sword in his Defence, but commanded him to leave his Cause to God, as the only proper Judge of it.

Now that must have been upon one of these Accounts: Either, (1*st*) because it is at all Times, and in all Cases, utterly unlawful for any Disciple of Christ to take the Sword. (2*dly*) Because at that Time, and in those Circumstances, it was not lawful for St. *Peter* to have done it.

As for the former of these, it is what even those who deny the use of the Sword to the Christian Magistrate, and will not allow him to draw it, either against an Enemy in a *lawful War*, or for the execution of Justice upon his own Subjects, will not adventure to say. Even they acknowledge that there is one Case, at least, wherein an innocent use may be made of it; namely, for a Man's own defence, when he can no otherwise secure himself against the Violence of an unjust Aggressor.

But we need not be beholden to the *Socinian* for this Concession; the Holy Scriptures inform us, that there are several Cases in which the Sword may lawfully be taken; and that not only by private Persons, for their own just and necessary Defence; but by the Civil Magistrate too; both for the punishment of Evil doers within, and to preserve his People from the Assaults of their Enemies without.

Many were the Crimes for which the Law of *Moses* required Malefactors to be put to Death. And with respect to one them, that of Murder, God has expressly declared, that there is no other way to free the Land from Pollution, but by the Blood of him that committed it; *Deut.* 35. 33. *For Blood defileth the Land: And the Land cannot be cleansed of the Blood that is shed therein, but by the Blood of him that shed it.*

And lest this should be thought inconsistent with the Perfection of the Gospel, and to have expired with the

other positive Laws of that Dispensation, St. *Paul*, in the 13th of the *Romans*, expresly puts the Sword into the Hands of the Civil Magistrate for the same Ends, *viz.* The Protection of good Men, and the Punishment of the Wicked and Unjust. For 'Rulers, says he, are 'not a Terror to good Works, but to evil. Wilt thou 'then not be afraid of the Power? Do that which is 'good and thou shalt have Praise of the same: For he 'is the Minister of God to thee for good. But if thou 'do that which is evil, be afraid: For he beareth not 'the Sword in vain: For he is (*here too*) the Minister 'of God; a Revenger, *not only allow'd, but appointed by* 'God, to execute Wrath upon him that does evil. *Rom.* 13. 4, *&c.*

The same is the Account which St. *Peter* gives us of the Power of the Civil Magistrate, 1 *Pet.* 2. 3. He requires us to submit to his Authority for the Lord's sake: And tells us, that it was given him for the same Ends St. *Paul* had before mentioned, *for the punishment of Evil-doers, and the praise*, the Protection, *of them that do Well.* And the very Passage of the Text, would Men but allow it but a reasonable Construction, implies the very same thing, namely, That *all those who take the Sword*, as St. *Prter* now did, without a lawful Warrant for their so doing, should *perish with the Sword*, should be punish'd with Death for it.

It is therefore without all Controversie, lawful for Christians, both Magistrates and Others, in several Cases, to take the Sword: And by consequence St. *Peter's* Offence must have consisted in this, that at that time, and in those Circumstances, it was not lawful for him to have taken it. Let us therefore enquire, (2dly.) What it was that made it so unlawful?

In answer whereunto we are told by some, that the Reason why our Saviour reprov'd St. *Peter* for taking the Sword, was this; That God had appointed him to die; that for this end He came into the World; and that the Apostle therefore in opposing those who were

come

come to take him in order thereunto, withstood God's Decree; and, in effect, fought against God. And indeed it must be allow'd, that the words which our Saviour subjoin'd upon this Occasion, do favour such an Opinion. Ver. 53,54. *Thinkest thou, that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve Legions of Angels: But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* And St. *John* either abridging his Discourse, or relating some other Passage which St. *Matthew* had omitted, speaks yet more expressly to the same purpose, *John* 18. 11. *Put up thy Sword into the sheath: the Cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

But tho' it must therefore be granted, that the Attempt of St. *Peter* was, upon this account also, worthy of blame; and as such censur'd by our Blessed Lord, yet that does not hinder but that his Action might have been, as indeed it was, in other respects, rash and unwarrantable. And so the words of our Saviour plainly intimate: They contain a Reason of perpetual force; such as had nothing to do with God's Decrees; namely, that all those who should take the Sword, that is, after such a manner, and in such Circumstances, as the Apostle here did, should perish with the Sword, should be worthy of Death for their so doing.

To understand therefore the true ground of our Saviour's Reproof in these words, we must consider, not what St. *Peter*'s fault was with respect to God's Decree for the Suffering of Christ; which they have no manner of relation to; but what it was that made his Attempt so Criminal towards Man, as to be a Capital Offence; and, even in our Lord's Judgment, worthy of Death.

Was it that he defended his blessed Master against the Assaults of those, who, without any lawful Authority, were come to seize Him? But this is no more than what the Law of Nature, and the Right of Self-preservation prescribes; and the positive Laws of all well-regulated Societies allow of; *viz.* To repel and unjust Violence; and where other means fail, to defend a Man's Life, by

force, against those who, by force, would take it away.

Or was it that He exceeded the Bounds of that Liberty which this natural Right of Self-defence, and Self-preservation, in such Cases, gives to every one, against those who seek their Destruction? But neither doth this appear. He made no undue haste: He smote not before he saw what they were about to do. He tarried till they had actually laid hands upon our Saviour, and declared their Resolution of carrying him forcibly away. *Matth.* 26. 50. *John* 18. 49.

Was it his fault that he did not tarry for the direction of our Lord, in answer to that Question which one of them at the same instant had put to him, *Shall we smite with the Sword?* But in such Cases as this there is no room for Deliberation: And supposing his Action to have been otherwise Innocent, it is hard to conceive how this alone could merit so severe a Reproof; much less make that which was its self lawful, by so small a defect, become a Capital Crime.

Cajetan. Jentac. vi. Q. 3.

Or, lastly, Was his Fault no other than what some politick Interpreters of the *Church* of *Rome* have supposed; That he rashly engaged against so great Odds, that He could expect nothing less than a certain Ruin from his Undertaking? But where both the Cause is Just, and the Means that are made use of for the Defence of it are lawful; the greatness of the danger enhanses the Glory of the Action, and adds to the Honour of him who has the courage to undertake it. At the most, in such a case, the Apostle would have been only guilty of an Imprudence: It might have cost him his Life; but could by no means have render'd him so Criminal as to be worthy to die.

Id. ibid.

In short; the only thing that can be imagined to have been capable of fixing so severe a Censure upon St. *Peter's* Action must have been this, that the Persons against whom he drew his Sword were the Ministers of Justice; and com-

Wolf. Harm. Evangelic. lib 2. cap. 1.

commission'd by a legal Authority to take our Blessed Saviour: And that being such, they were not to be resisted in the Execution of their Office. And so St. *Matthew* tells us, Ver. 47. *While he yet spake, lo* Judas, *one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude, with swords and staves, from the Chief Priests and Elders of the People*; that is, from those who had the lawful Authority to send them. But St. *John* is more express; he adds, that they were the Roman Soldiers, who guarded the Temple at the Feast, with their Captain, or Chief-Officer, at their head. So that St. *Peter* could not but have known who they were; and must therefore have been the more inexcusable, in offering any Violence to them, *John* 18. 12. *Then the Band, and the Captain, and Officers of the* Jews, *took* Jesus *and bound him.* And it appears from St. *Luke*, that his Apprehension was not only made by the Order of the *Sanhedrim*, but that some of that Council were present in Person at the Execution of their Order, *Chap.* 22. 52. *Then said* Jesus *to the Chief Priests and Captains of the Temple, and the Elders, which were come to him.*

These were the Persons who came to take our Saviour, and this was the Authority by which they did it. And therefore St. *Peter*'s fault must have consisted in this, that he drew his Sword against those who had a lawful Power to Apprehend him. For however the Jews were at this time a Conquer'd People under the Power of the *Romans*, and govern'd by the Emperor's Lieutenant; yet still the Great Council at *Jerusalem* was allow'd to retain its Authority, and to exercise its Power, by their own Laws, as before.

It has, I know, been doubted by some learned Men, whether they still retain'd the Power of Life and Death: And one Passage there is, in this very History, which seems to imply that they did not: *John* 18. 31. where demanding Judgment of *Pilate* against our Saviour, they told him that it was not *lawful for them to put any Man to death.* Let this be as it will, thus much is certain, that they had Authority to Apprehend him; To examine into

into the *Crimes* which should be laid against him; To have *punish'd* him with some lesser *Punishment* themselves; and, if they saw occasion, to have deliver'd him to the *Roman Governor* for the *last* and *highest Sentence*. And therefore, whatsoever Malice there may have been (as certainly there was enough of that) in their Prosecution of our *Lord*, yet hitherto they proceeded in a *legal Method* against Him: And, doing so, it was not lawful for any *private Persons*, such as St. *Peter* and the rest of the *Apostles* were, to oppose them with Force in what they did. This was the true ground of our *Saviour*'s Reproof; and it is thus faithfully and judiciously Paraphrased, by our Learned Dr. *Hammond*; ' *Put up thy Sword into his place*; Do ' nothing contrary to Law; *For all they that take the Sword,* ' *shall perish with the Sword*; All that draw and use the Sword ' without (*and how much more against*) the Authority of Those ' which bear the Sword; shall fall themselves by it; shall incur ' the Punishment of Death.

Grot. in loc. Et de Jur. B. ac P. lib. 1. cap. 3. §. 3. n 7.

Having thus endeavour'd with all the clearness I could, to represent to you the true Reason of that Reproof which our Saviour gave to St. *Peter* upon this occasion, I proceed

II. To shew, That, upon the same grounds, it *still is*, and *will ever be*, *Unlawful* for any *other Christians*, in the like Circumstances, to *take the Sword*.

Among all the popular Pretences that have been set up to justifie *private Persons* in their unwarrantable Attempts against *publick Authority*, there is none that carries a fairer Appearance, or has done greater Mischief in the World, than this; That *it is lawful to defend Religion with the Sword*; and whatsoever the Enterprize would otherwise have been thought, this shall transform it into a Glorious and Heroical Undertaking.

How far this Opinion has carried some deluded Zealots, I shall not need to say: I would to God our own Histories did not afford us too many Instances of it. But this I take to be clear and certain, That had we no other Passage of Holy Scripture to convince us of the Falseness of such a Pretension; no Directions of any ancient Writers to inform us what the Duty of a Christian in times of Persecution is; No Examples of Antiquity to shew us what his Behaviour ought to be; This single Passage and Example, alone, might suffice to assure us, how directly contrary such a Principle must be, both to the *Practice* of our *Saviour*, and the *Rules* of his *Gospel*.

For,

For indeed, what can any one pretend to offer in Excuſe of ſuch an Attempt now, that St. *Peter* might not with greater Reaſon have alledg'd in Vindication of himſelf upon this Occaſion?

Has the *True Religion* ſuch a *Right* on its ſide, as to be able to warrant any Violence againſt thoſe who oppoſe it; and would oppreſs us upon the account of it? But ſurely no one can, with equal Evidence, prove his *Church* or *Faith* to be the *Right* now, that St. *Peter* could have demonſtrated that for which he would engaged, to have been the *True Religion* heretofore. Nor can any more maliciouſly, or injuriouſly oppoſe any *Religion*, or *perſecute* its *Profeſſors*, than the *Jews*, in the preſent Caſe, did both our *Lord* and *his Goſpel*.

Or ſhall we ſay, as ſome have done, that *Inferior Magiſtrates* may be Reſiſted, tho' the *Supreme* may not; when they would otherwiſe deſtroy an Innocent Perſon, tho' in a *legal way*, and with an *appearance* of *Juſtice*? But thoſe who here purſued our *Saviour* were no other: They were the *Subordinate Powers*: Men permitted, or at the moſt intruſted, and commiſſioned by the *Emperor*, to Govern under him by certain Laws, and within certain Limits preſcribed to them for that purpoſe. And for the Perſon againſt whom they acted, I ſhall not need to ſay, that the Holy *Jeſus* was one of the moſt Innocent, that was ever oppreſs'd under a ſhew of *legal Power* and *Authority*.

Or laſtly; Tho' the *lawful Magiſtrate*, whether *Supreme* or *Subordinate*, may not be *reſiſted* in the Exerciſe of their *Authority*, ſhall we pretend that *thoſe* who are Commiſſion'd by *them* may be withſtood? But ſuch were *thoſe* who now came to apprehend our *Saviour*. Neither *Pilate* nor the *High-Prieſt* were there in Perſon, nor the *Council* in a Body; but they ſent their *Officers* and *Soldiers*, the *Captain* of the *Guard*, and it may be ſome of their *own Members* along with *them*, to ſee that they did their Duty. But they had a *lawful Authority* for what they did: Their Power was juſt, tho' at preſent employ'd on a very wicked Deſign; and, therefore their Procedure being *Lawful*, they were not to be *reſiſted*, no not in defence of our *Saviour Chriſt* himſelf.

And if neither the Malice of the *Jews*, nor the Innocence of our *Lord*; If neither the Truth of our Religion perſecuted in its Founder, nor the apparent marks of Malice and Envy, of Violence and Oppreſſion, which appear'd in the whole Courſe of their Proſecution of him, were ſufficient to warrant St. *Peter* to draw the Sword in his Defence, againſt *that legal Authority* by

which

which they acted: We must conclude, that neither will any of these Pretences suffice to justifie any other Christians, in the like Circumstances, now: But, if it shall please God at any time to permit the lawful Powers to be against us, and make them that hate us to rule over us, we must follow the Example of our Blessed *Master*, and submit patiently to *their Authority*; and not, with this warm Apostle, *take the Sword against those, to whom God has committed the Power of the Sword.*

Let this then suffice to shew, what the true Christian Doctrine of *Submission* to the Civil Magistrate, is. I shall not here enquire whether some may not possibly have misapplied these Principles; or have stretch'd them farther than they ought to have done; and, by that means, have led both themselves and others into great Mistakes, and no less Inconveniences. What that *Authority* in every *State* or *Country* is, to which such a *Subjection*, as I have now been speaking of, is due; and against which no *Resistance*, no not to defend the *Best Cause*, or the most *Innocent Person* in the World, may be used by any of the *Community*; is a Point which the Municipal *Laws* and *Constitution* of every *State* and *Country* must determine. But that wherever that *Supreme Power* and *Authority* is lodged, or in whomsoever it resides, to which God has commanded us to be *subject*, not *only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake*: Concerning which St. *Paul* has laid down this Rule, *Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers*: And St. *Peter* himself declared, That we *must submit to it for the Lord's sake*; we are bound to pay either an Active or Passive Obedience to it; must either do what it requires, or suffer what it inflicts; This is without controversie the standing Doctrine of Christianity, and has been confirm'd by the Practice of the best Christians in all Ages of the Church.

Which being so, Let us go on finally upon these Principles to consider,

III*dly*, What we are to judge of those who, notwithstanding so plain an Admonition, not only took the Sword (though that had been too much) but cut off with it that Royal Person, who alone had the rightful Power of it.

And here I cannot follow either a plainer or surer Guide, than our Laws themselves; which speak not only with Authority, but Approbation too; and tell us, in effect, what the Sense of the whole Nation is, or at least ought to be, both of Them and their Proceedings. The * *FACT* it self they call a *Horrid, Execrable, Detestable Murder*; an *impious Fact*, an *unparallel'd*

parallel'd Treason: The * *COURT* which decreed it, a *Traiterous Assembly*; A *prodigious*, and *unheard of Tribunal*. The * *PERSONS* who thus unwarrantably drew the Sword against their own Sovereign, they brand as a parcel of *wretched Men, desperately Wicked, hardned in ther Impiety*. And lastly, as to the * *PRINCIPLES* upon which they proceeded, the same Laws declare, 'That *by the Undoubted and Fundamental Laws of this Kingdom, neither the Peers of this Realm, nor the Commons, nor Both together; in Parliament, or out of Parliamen; Collectively, or Representively; nor any Other Persons whatsoever; ever had, have, hath, ought to have, any Coercive power over the Persons of the Kings of this Realm.*

See Stat. 12 Car. II. cap. ix.

Ibid. cap xxx.

Such is the Censure which our Laws have pass'd upon the Murder of our Royal Sovereign, and the Persons who committed it: And the same is the Sense which both the *Word of God*, and the *Laws of all other Nations*, teach us to have of Both.

For to allow that some Things had been done, under the Authority of that unfortunate Prince, less regularly than were to have been wish'd: That the *Prerogative* had been strain'd to an exorbitant Heighth, and the Subject too much provoked to complain, if not of the King himself, yet of those who were about him; and should have advised and acted more moderately than they did. To grant that when the Parliament met, with which our Troubles began; it was excusable, or even fitting, for it to have redressed those Grievances, and reduc'd the Prerogative within its just bounds; and that those therefore who enter'd upon the proper Methods of doing this, in a Parliamentary way, without any ill Designs either against the Person or Government of the King, were not to be blamed: Yet certainly when this was done, and thereupon such † *Acts* were passed as not only abundantly repaired whatever the Subject had suffered before, but sufficiently secur'd him against any more Invasions either of his *Liberty* or *Property*, for the time to come; for Men to proceed farther still, and without any *lawful Authority*, or *evident Necessity*, enter into a War against their Sovereign, who had so far condescended to all their just desires, must needs have been as Illegal, as it was Unreasonable; and bespeak those who did it to have taken the Sword, in that Sense which our Saviour

See my Lord Clarendon's *Hist. of the Civil Wars*, Vol I, fol. p. 6, 22, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, &c. 221.

† *See* 16 Car. I. cap. 10, 11, 14. 16, 20.

Saviour here forbad, and all good Men have ever Condemn'd.

Had that excellent Prince, indeed, never called his laſt Parliament at all, nor given any Opportunity to his People to redreſs their Grievances by the proper Methods of it: Had he not only continu'd to inſiſt upon thoſe Pretenſions, which ſome had ſet up under the ſhelter of his Authority; but ſo far improv'd them, as utterly to ſet aſide the *Laws of the Realm*, and to *act Arbitrarily*, not only *without Law*, but *againſt it*: And when nothing elſe would do, had he choſen rather to Deſert the Government, than to Rule according to his own Oath, and the fundamental Laws and Limitations of it; this might have warranted an oppreſſed People to take the Sword, for the neceſſary defence of their Laws and Conſtitution, and their Religion and Liberties, founded thereupon. But to take up Arms againſt a King whoſe Exceſſes had been Moderate, and whoſe Neceſſities preſſed him, contrary to his own Inclinations, to run into the moſt of them; But eſpecially, who had already, without force, not only freely Redreſſed the Grievances of his People, but abundantly Repair'd them; and ſecured them againſt the like Attempts for the future; This muſt needs have been an unwarrantable Enterprize; a War as unjuſtifiable in its Riſe, as it proved fatal in its Conſequences.

Nor will the Pretence of Religion at all alter the Caſe, or make their taking of the Sword ever the more lawful; tho' we ſhould ſuppoſe that there had been as juſt Cauſe of Complaint in that reſpect, as ſome Men affirm'd: tho' it is, after all, certain that there was not. It was upon this ground, as we have ſeen, that our Saviour was perſecuted by the *Jews*. They ſought his Deſtruction for this very reaſon, that he profeſſed himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*, and would have introduc'd a new Religion among them, contrary, as they ſuppoſed, to the Law of *Moſes*. And yet Chriſt himſelf thought not this a ſufficient Warrant for St. *Peter* to take the Sword againſt the lawful Magiſtrate, tho' he took it only in defence of his Maſter, without the leaſt deſign of diſturbing the publick Peace by it.

But alas! this is yet but a ſmall part of that Guilt we are now aſſembled to Commemorate and Bewail. Our furious Zealots did not only take the Sword againſt the Authority of their Prince, but they ſtained it with the Blood of his Sacred Perſon. A Wickedneſs hardly to be parallell'd in any other Country; nor ever to be mention'd by our ſelves without Shame and Deteſtation.

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It was the Question of Holy *David* to *Abishai*, when he would have smitten *Saul*; and it contains the Sense of all other wise and good Men. in the like Case; 1 *Sam.* 22. 9. *Who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's Anointed, and be guiltless?* And yet at that time *Saul* was a Prince rejected by the same God who had made him King before; and *David* was appointed to Reign over *Israel* in his stead. So that *Saul* was little more than King in Fact, but *David* had the Right; and that by an immediate divine Appointment and Authority. But he had been the Anointed of the Lord; and he was still in Possession of the Government; and there was, upon both Accounts, such a Respect due to him, that his Person was Sacred; so that *no one could stretch out his hand against him, and be guiltless.*

Nay more; *Saul* at that time pursued *David* for this Reason, that he knew God had anointed him to be King in his stead; tho' *David* had done nothing to disturb him in his Government, any more than he would now suffer any thing to be done to destroy his Person. And yet neither the Decree of God, nor the Violence of *Saul*; neither his Wickedness in the sight of the one, nor his Injustice towards the other, were thought sufficient by *David* to warrant him to make any attempt upon his Life: tho' God seemed, by a singular Disposition of his Providence, to have deliver'd him into his Hands. But he left his Cause to God, and appeal'd to him, as the only Judge of Sovereign Princes, *Ver.* 10, 11. *David said farthermore; As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; Or his Day shall come to die; or he shall descend into Battel and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine Hand against the Lord's Anointed!*

This was *David*'s Conduct, and these the Principles upon which he founded it: And the same have been both the Notions and the Behaviour of the Wisest and Best Men, upon the like Occasions, ever since. But our Cruel Murtherers had other Thoughts: They acted by other Measures. God deliver'd their Sovereign into their Hands, and they laid hold of the opportunity to destroy him. They *shed the Blood of War in Peace*, and made themselves at once the *Arraigners*, the *Judges*, and the *Executioners*, of their *own King*.

Vide Optat. Milevit. lib. ii. p. 47. Edit. Ult. Grot. de Jur. B. ac. P. lib. i. cap. iv. §. 7. n. 6.

A horrid, execrable, detestable Wickedness! The *Scandal* of our *Country*; the *Wound* and *Reproach* of our *Holy Religion*! I would to God I might

12 Car. 2. c. 30. §. 1.

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ſtop here; but I muſt add, the Guilt, the Sin, the Pollution of the whole Kingdom! the Effects of which we have ſeen, we have felt; we continue both to ſee, and feel, at this very Day.

Oh! May it be the Subject of our Sorrow and Repentance too! May we never think of it without Shame; never ſpeak of it but with an Execration!

But more eſpecially on this Day, ſet apart by publick Authority, on purpoſe to engage us to a National Humiliation of our ſelves for ſo great a Wickedneſs; may we All ſincerely deprecate the Vengeance of God, which this Royal Blood calls aloud for to Heaven againſt us!

May no profane Perſons either make a Mock of this Piety, or neglect to join in the Exerciſes of it! No deluded Zealots, either continue in to juſtifie what was then done amiſs; or to entertain ſuch Principles, as may ever lead them to the like Villany!

May the Sword never more be taken among us, but by lawful Authority: Either to execute Juſtice againſt Evil-doers at Home, or to defend us againſt the Aſſaults of our Enemies Abroad! And then may we always draw it with ſucceſs; to the Puniſhment of the One, and our common Safety, and Preſervation againſt the Other.

May our Religion evermore ſupport our Loyalty; and our Loyalty be ſo happy as to defend and ſecure our Religion. This will make both our Princes ſafe, and our Country happy. While the Sword is thus uſed, there can be no danger from it to either; but, on the contrary, it will protect and ſupport Both. This will ſuppreſs Malefactors within, and guard us againſt Oppreſſors without. In a word; By thus lawfully taking the Sword, in Subordination to thoſe who have the Power of it, we ſhall become a united, peaceable, flouriſhing People; as by the contrary uſe of it, we were made a miſerable, divided, ruined Nation: Till God in his Mercy reſtored us to that orderly Frame of Government, from which we had departed; And in which, may he vouchſafe to continue us and our Poſterity, till all theſe States ſhall be diſſolved; and the *Kingdoms of the Earth become the Kingdoms of God, and his Chriſt*! Amen, Amen.

FINIS.